

REMARKS

Claims 1 – 4 and 7 – 26 are pending. Claims 1 – 4, 7 – 11, 13, 14 and 16 – 26 are rejected. Claims 12 and 15 contain allowable subject matter but are objected to because they depend from a rejected claim.

The applicant's attorney cancels claim 8, amends claims 1, 11, 19, 24 and 26, and adds claims 27 – 36. New claim 27 is an independent claim that combines the subject matter of claims 11 and 12. New claim 28 is an independent claim that combines the subject matter of claims 11, 14 and 15. New claims 27 and 28 are not narrower than their respective claims 12 and 15, and do not add new matter. The amendments to claims 1, 11, 19, 24 and 26, and the new claims 29 – 36 also do not add new matter. The applicant's attorney respectfully asserts that claims 1 – 4, 7 and 9 – 36, as amended, are in condition for allowance for at least the reasons discussed below.

If, after considering this response, the examiner believes the claims should not be allowed, the applicants' attorney respectfully requests that before issuing an Office Action, the examiner call Mr. John Janeway (425-455- 5575) to schedule a telephone conference to further the prosecution of the claims.

Claims 1 – 4, 7, 9 – 10 and 29 – 36

The applicant's attorney respectfully asserts that claim 1, as amended, is patentable over Japanese document JP 52143691 (Arikawa) and U.S. Patent 5,791,600 issued to Thompson (Thompson) because each at least fails to disclose a multi-mode hull that allows a vessel to maneuver in at least two operational modes.

The applicant's claim 1, as amended, recites a vessel that includes a multi-mode hull operable to allow the vessel to maneuver in at least two operational modes.

For example, as shown in FIGS. 1 and 5A – 5D and discussed in paragraphs 16 and 39 – 45 of the specification, a ship 100 includes a multi-mode hull 510 whose draft can be changed to allow the ship 100 to operate in different operational modes. For

example, the draft of the ship 100 can be shallow as shown in FIG. 5A to allow the ship to operate in a logistics mode. In the logistics mode, the ship 100 can perform tasks in shallow water, such as delivering supplies and personnel to a recently established beachhead. The draft of the ship 100 can also be deep as shown in FIG. 5D to allow the ship to operate in a low freeboard mode. In the low freeboard mode, the ship 100 is difficult to detect and thus can perform missions requiring stealth.

In contrast, Arikawa fails to disclose a multi-mode hull that allows a vessel to maneuver in at least two operational modes. Arikawa appears to disclose a ship 1 including a monohull, a bay 3, and a boat 2 that can enter and leave the bay 3 via a ramp 4 while the ship 1 is at sea. The hull shown for the ship 1 is a monohull. Arikawa does not show the ship 1 maneuvering in different operational modes. Therefore, unlike the applicants' claimed method, the ship 1 in Arikawa does not include a multi-mode hull.

Also in contrast, Thompson fails to disclose a multi-mode hull that allows a vessel to maneuver in at least two operational modes. Thompson appears to disclose an orbiting space station 30 (FIG. 3), an NTSB Orbitor 32 (FIG. 3) that includes a hull (body), and a modular system 8 (FIG. 3) that is attachable to the station or Orbitor. Thompson does not disclose other hulls (bodies) for the Orbitor 32, and does not show or discuss the Orbitor 32 operating in different operational modes. Therefore, unlike the applicant's claimed method, the Orbitor 32 does not include a multi-mode hull.

Claims 2 – 4, 7, 9 – 10 and 29 – 36 are patentable by virtue of their dependencies on claim 1 as amended.

Claims 11 – 18

Claim 11 is patentable over Arikawa for reasons similar to those recited above in support of claim 1 over Arikawa.

Claims 13, 14 and 16 – 18 are patentable by virtue of their dependencies from claim 11.

Claims 19 – 23

Claim 19 is patentable over Arikawa for reasons similar to those recited above in support of claim 1 over Arikawa.

Claims 20 – 23 are patentable by virtue of their dependencies from claim 19.

Claims 24 and 25

Claim 24 is patentable over Arikawa for reasons similar to those recited above in support of claim 1 over Arikawa.

Claim 25 is patentable by virtue of its dependency from claim 24.

Claim 26

Claim 26 is patentable over Arikawa for reasons similar to those recited above in support of claim 1 over Arikawa.

Conclusion

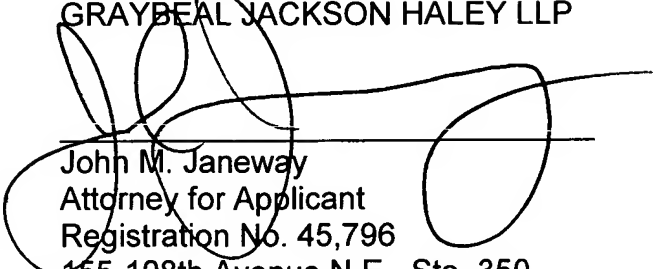
The applicant's attorney respectfully requests the examiner withdraw the rejection and objection to claims 1 – 4 and 7, and 9 – 26, and issue an allowance for claims 1 – 4 and 7, and 9 – 36.

Should any additional fees be required, please charge them to Deposit Account No. 07-1897.

If, after considering this response, the examiner believes the claims should not be allowed, the applicants' attorney respectfully requests that before issuing an Office Action, the examiner call to schedule a telephone conference to further the prosecution of the claims.

DATED this 10th day of May 2006.

Respectfully submitted,
GRAYBEAL JACKSON HALEY LLP



John M. Janeway
Attorney for Applicant
Registration No. 45,796
155-108th Avenue N.E., Ste. 350
Bellevue, WA 98004-5973
(425) 455-5575